

American History Vocabulary Terms
Unit 1 – Different Worlds Meet
Chapters 1-2

1. **Archaeology** the study of ancient peoples
2. **Artifact** an item left behind by early people that represents their culture
3. **Ice Age** a period of extremely cold temperatures when part of the planet's surface was covered with massive ice sheets
4. **Nomad** people who move from place to place, usually in search of food or grazing land
5. **Migration** a movement of a large number of people into a new homeland
6. **Maize** an early form of corn grown by Native Americans
7. **Carbon Dating** a scientific method used to determine the age of an artifact
8. **Culture** a way of life of a group of people who share similar beliefs and customs
9. **Civilization** a highly developed culture, usually with organized religions and laws
10. **Theocracy** a form of government in which the society is ruled by religious leaders
11. **Hieroglyphics** an ancient form of writing using symbols and pictures to represent words, sounds, and concepts
12. **Terrace** a raised piece of land with the top leveled off to promote farming
13. **Classical** relating to ancient Greece and Rome
14. **Renaissance** a period of intellectual and artistic creativity from 1300-1600 AD
15. **Astrolabe** an instrument used by sailors to observe positions of stars
16. **Caravel** small, fast ship with a broad bow
17. **Pilgrimage** a journey to a holy place
18. **Mosque** Islamic house of worship
19. **Line of demarcation** an imaginary line running down the middle of the Atlantic dividing the Americas between Spain and Portugal
20. **Circumnavigate** to sail around the world
21. **Conquistador** Spanish explorer in the Americas
22. **Tribute** money paid for protection
23. **Pueblo** home built by Native Americans
24. **Mission** religious settlement
25. **Presidio** Spanish fort in the Americas built to protect missions
26. **Encomienda** system of rewarding conquistadors with tracts of land and the right to tax and demand labor from Natives who lived on the land
27. **Plantation** a large estate run by an owner and farmed by laborers who lived there
28. **Mercantilism** the theory that a state's or nation's power depended on its wealth
29. **Columbian Exchange** exchange of goods, ideas, and people between Europe and the Americas
30. **Northwest Passage** water route to Asia through North America sought by European explorers